Disqualification of Non-Serious Political Parties

4426. SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have recently suggested disqualification of non-serious political parties which have not been active during the last five years:

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the names of such parties:

(c) whether some suggestions have also been made regarding the contest of independents candidates, and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d). Certain proposals to discourage contest by non-serious independent candidates were discussed by the Government with political parties some time back. Based on the consensus arrived at, some of these suggestions were given effect to by the Representation of the People (Amendment) Act, 1996.

Assistance to A.P. by World Bank

4427. DR. T SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Ministry of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have permitted to the State Government of Andhra Pradesh to have assistance from World Bank for improvement of their financial position; and

(b) if so, the details of the assistance sought by the State Government of Andhra Pradesh alongwith the assistance provided and proposed to be provided by the World Bank sofar?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) Government of Andhra Pradesh have been having some discussions with the World Bank regarding a Fiscal Adjustment Programme. The State Government have been requested to firm up their views and ideas and to send to the Central Government a detailed project proposal which could then be considered by the Central Government. Since the detailed proposal is yet to be received, no formal proposal has been sent to the World Bank to provide such assistance.

(b) Does not arise.

Dubious Companies in Teak Plantation

4428. SHRI NARAYAN ATHAWALAY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government ae aware of growing number of dubious companies getting into teak plantation business praying on small investors through attractive promises of return on investment;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to safeguard the interest of small investors and ensure that funds collected by such companies are utilised properly for intended purpose and not diverted to other activities?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (c) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have reported that companies engaged in teak plantation business as their principal business are excluded from the definition of 'financial institutions' and as such are outside the purview of the various regulatory provisions of Chapter-III-B of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1994.

Maruti Udyog

4429. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Central Excise Department has asked the Maruti Udyog Limited to pay the outstanding amount for Rs. 50 crores;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken or proposed to be taken to recover the outstanding amount from the maruti Udyog Limited?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (c) Central Excise dues amounting to Rs.4995.72 lakhs (including penalty of Rs.1000.00 lakhs) are outstanding against M/s. Maruti Udyog Ltd.

The Company has obtained unconditional stay from Delhi High Court on 3.12.96 against any recovery proceedings.

Import of Rough Blanks

4430. DR. BALIRAM : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Othlamic Rough Blanks (ORB) for making spectacle and gogal frames are imported from different countries by importers in Optical Trade in Delhi and Bombay in Container Loads;

(b) whether these importers during the last many years have paid/transferred in foreign countries the difference between the actual amount to be paid to their foreign suppliers and the under invoiced amount by way of Hawala Transactions, thereby duping Government by evading the payment of customs duty and sales tax on under-invoiced value with the connivance of customs officers and Hawala Dealers; and